INITIAL AGENCY SCOPING REVIEW

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Agency Scoping Meeting Notice

This letter is dated June 14, 2006 and is addressed to Federal Agencies, State Agencies and Metropolitan Planning Organizations from Mr. Edgar T. Hurle, Connecticut Department of Transportation. The subject of the letter was the Danbury Branch Line Study – Phase 2 Alternatives Analysis/NEPA and CEPA Documentation.

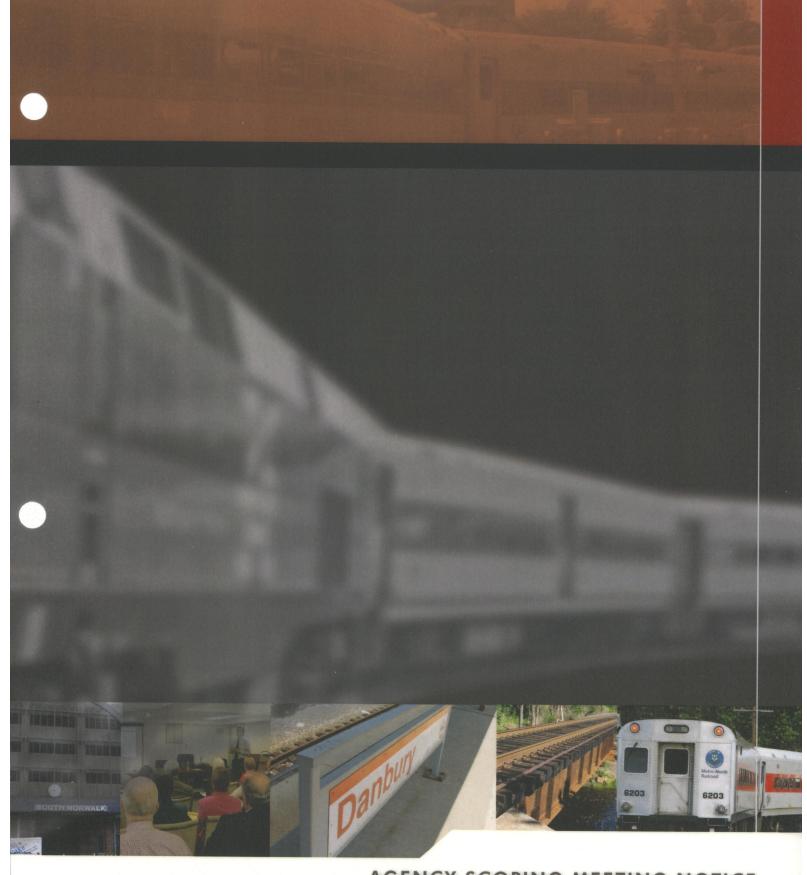
The letter gave notice to the above referenced parties that "An agency scoping meeting has been scheduled at the ConnDOT offices, Union Station, New Haven, CT, July 11, 2006, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. to discuss the phase 2 Scope of Work and Study Process.

Attached to the letter were copies of the Executive Summary of the Phase 1 Study and Analysis and the revised Draft Scope of Services for review and comment.

Agency Scoping Meeting Minutes

This letter was dated July 27, 2006 and is addressed to Cooperating Agencies from Mr. Edgar T. Hurle, Connecticut Department of Transportation. The subject of the letter was the Danbury Branch Line Study – Phase II, Final Scope of Services, Alternatives Analysis/NEPA and CEPA Documentation.

This letter noted that the meeting was held on July 11, 2006 and no substantial comments were received that would require modifications to the Draft Scope of Work. It stated, "Therefore consider the Scope of Work you received on June 14, 2006 as the final Scope of Work for this Study."



AGENCY SCOPING MEETING NOTICE



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



2800 BERLIN TURNPIKE, P.O. BOX 317546 NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06131-7546 Phone:

June 14, 2006

To:

Federal Agencies

State Agencies

Metropolitan Planning Organizations

From:

Edgar T. Hurle

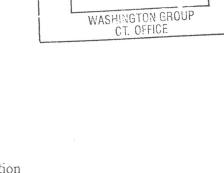
Transportation Planning Director Bureau of Policy and Planning

OBJATHUR S. Holder

Subject:

Danbury Branch Line Study - Phase 2

Alternatives Analysis / NEPA and CEPA Documentation



The Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), will be preparing an Alternative Analysis (AA) and environmental documentation regarding proposals for improving the Danbury Branch rail line between South Norwalk and New Milford. It is anticipated that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) will be prepared in accordance with the National (NEPA) and Connecticut Environmental Policy Acts (CEPA). ConnDOT has recently completed the Phase 1 Feasibility Study Danbury Branch Electrification. An agency scoping meeting has been scheduled at the ConnDOT offices, Union Station, New Haven, CT, 4th floor West, Conference Room C on July 11, 2006, 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., to discuss the Phase 2 Scope of Work and Study process.

The Alternatives recommended for further consideration as a result of the Phase 1 analysis include: (A) No Build; (B) Transportation System Management; (C) South Norwalk to Danbury Improvements including electrification, passing sidings, and minor track realignment; (D) Extension of diesel passenger service from Danbury to New Milford, with improvements, including new stations and minor track realignment; and (E) Partial Electrification from South Norwalk to the vicinity of Route 15. Enclosed for your information is the Executive Summary of the Phase 1 Study analysis and findings. Additional information can be viewed on the Study web site at www.danburybranchstudy.com.

Phase 2 of this Study will include a more detailed evaluation of the five alternatives selected from Phase 1 (noted above), and the development of a recommended implementation plan. Issues that will be analyzed in depth include operational characteristics, infrastructure needs, the effects of the plan on noise, air, water quality, and cultural and recreational resources, as well as other social, economic and environmental effects, and capital and operating costs.

The enclosed Phase 2 Draft Scope of Work for the AA/EIS and EIE includes many of the suggestions made during its initial review. As part of the process to finalize the Study scope in accordance with NEPA and CEPA, ConnDOT requests your comments on the Phase 2 Draft Scope of Services and participation at the July 11, 2006 meeting. This review will be used to:

- Identify the range of important concerns and potential impacts to be addressed in the AA/EIS and EIE;
- Identify and eliminate from the detailed Study, the issues which are not critical or which have been addressed by prior review;
- Identify other environmental review and consultation requirements; and
- Develop a consensus regarding the Study process.

Since the rail line under study follows the Housatonic, Still, and Norwalk River corridors and their associated wetlands, any impacts to those regulated areas will require a Section 404 permit and a CT Inland Wetland and/or Stream Channel Encroachment Line Permit; and may affect fish and wildlife habitat. This rail corridor also contributes to the economic vitality of the Study region and state. Therefore, due to the special expertise you can provide, ConnDOT requests your participation in this Study as a cooperating agency.

As such, ConnDOT expects your agency's involvement to entail only those areas under its jurisdiction and expertise, and no direct writing or analysis will be necessary for document preparation. The activities that will be taken to maximize interagency cooperation may include the following:

- 1. Invitations for your agency to participate in scoping meetings and other meetings;
- 2. Consultation with your agency on any relevant technical studies that will be required for the project;
- 3. Organizing joint field reviews;
- 4. Providing your agency with project information, including Study results;
- 5. Requesting that your agency review relevant sections of the Draft EIS and Draft EIE prior to its release for comment by the public and other agencies.
- 6. Encourage your agency to use the above documents to express your views on subjects within your jurisdiction or expertise; and
- 7. Include information in the project environmental documents that cooperating agencies need to discharge their NEPA and CEPA responsibilities, and any other requirements regarding jurisdictional approvals, permits, licenses, and/or clearances.

Your agency has the right to expect that the AA/EIS and EIE will enable you to discharge your jurisdictional responsibilities. Likewise, your agency has the obligation to inform ConnDOT if, at any point in the process, your needs are not being met. It is also expected that at the completion of this Study, the AA/EIS, EIE, and ConnDOT's public involvement process will satisfy all NEPA and CEPA requirements, including those related to the consideration of alternatives, and the identification of environmental consequences and mitigation. Further,

ConnDOT intends to utilize the AA/EIS, EIE, and subsequent Record of Decision as the decision-making documents and as the basis for future permit applications.

As indicated in the Phase 1 documentation and Phase 2 Draft Scope of Services, this Study will continue to be conducted through a public process, with the participation of a Study Advisory Committee and in cooperation with federal, state and regional agencies.

If you are unable to attend this meeting it is requested that you appoint a proxy to attend in your place. Please contact Mr. Leonard Lapsis, the ConnDOT Project Manager, at (860) 594-2143 or by e-mail at leonard.lapsis@po.state.ct.us to acknowledge your attendance at the July 11, 2006 meeting (lunch will be provided).

Enclosures

Mailing List

Danbury Branch Line Study – Phase 2 Alternatives Analysis / NEPA and CEPA Documentation

Mr. Greg Mannesto Biologist U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Route 1A Shoreline Plaza P.O. Box 307 Charlestown RI 02813

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Ms. Susan Lee
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New England District - Corps of Engineers
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Mr. John Cilcota Senior Transportation Analyst Federal Railroad Administration 1120 Vermont Ave, NW Washington, D.C. 2005

Mr. Irwin B. Kessman
Director of Planning and Program Development
Federal Transit Administration, Region 2
One Bowling Green, Room 429
New York, NY 10004

Hon. James F. Abromaitis Commissioner Department of Economic and Community Development 505 Hudson Street Hartford, CT 06106

El Parker Marian Marian

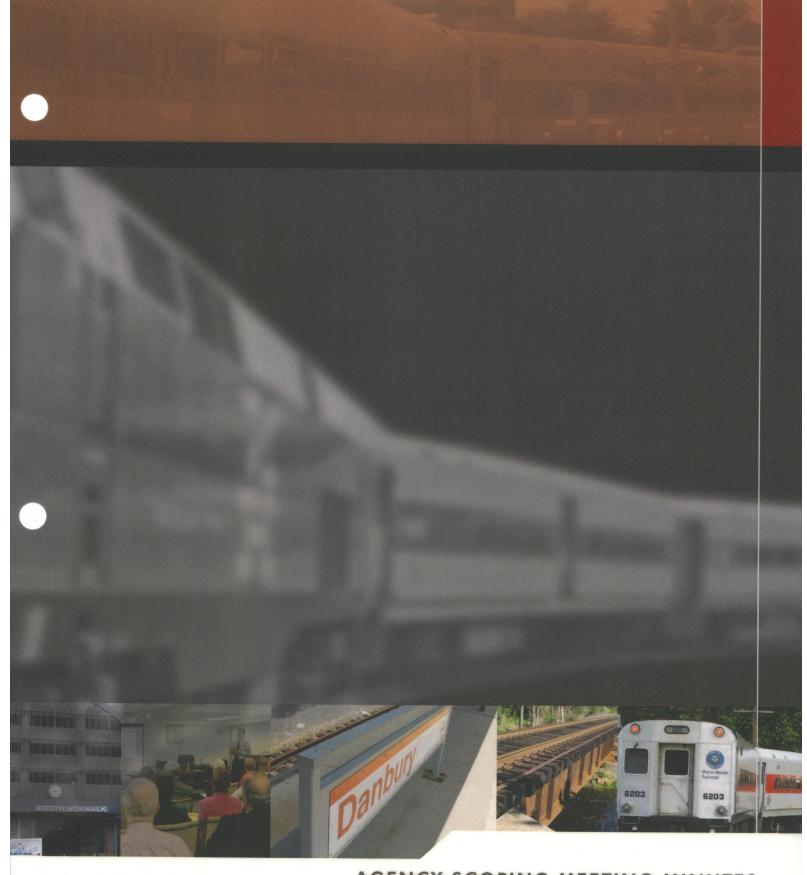
Mr. Frederick Riese Senior Environmental Analyst Department of Environmental Protection 79 Elm Street Hartford, CT 06106-5127

Mr. Carl Wagener Connecticut Council on Environmental Quality 79 Elm Street Hartford, CT 06106

Mr. J. Paul Loether
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Mr. Robert Wilson
Director
South Western Regional Planning Agency
888/Washington Boulevard – 3rd Floor
Stamford, CT 06901

Mr. Jonathan Chew Director Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials Old Town Hall Route 25 Brookfield, CT 06804



AGENCY SCOPING MEETING MINUTES



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

2800 BERLIN TURNPIKE, P.O. BOX 317546 NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06131-7546 Phone:

July 27, 2006



To:

Cooperating Agencies

From:

Transportation Planning Director

Bureau of Policy and Planning

Subject: Danbury Branch Line Study - Phase II

Final Scope of Services

Alternatives Analysis/NEPA and CEPA Documentation

Thank you for assisting the Connecticut Department of Transportation (Department) in the development of the Scope of Services for the Danbury Branch Line Study - Phase 2 Alternative Analysis/National (NEPA) and Connecticut Environmental Policy Acts (CEPA) Documentation (Scope of Services).

A Draft Scope of Services was transmitted on April 14, 2006 for your review and comment. On June 14, 2006 the Department transmitted to your agency/organization, a revised Draft Scope of Services for your review and comment, including an invitation to participate in this Study as a Cooperating Agency and attend an Agency Scoping Meeting (July 11, 2006). The meeting was held and no substantive comments were received that would require modifications to the Draft Scope of Work. Therefore, please consider the Scope of Work you received on June 14, 2006 as the final Scope of Work for this Study.

The Department looks forward to working with you towards the successful development of this initiative, which is an important part of Governor M. Jodi Rell's Roadmap for Connecticut's Economic Future.

If you have any further questions or comments regarding this Study, please contact Mr. Leonard Lapsis, the Department's project manager, at (860) 594-2143 or by e-mail at leonard.lapsis@po.state.ct.us.

<u>Cooperating Agencies</u> Danbury Branch Line Study – Phase II

Mr. Greg Mannesto Biologist U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Route 1A Shoreline Plaza P.O. Box 307 Charlestown RI 02813

Mr. Michael Marsh U.S. Environmental Protection Agency New England Region 1 1 Congress Street, Street 1 Boston, MA 02114

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Mr. John Cilcota Senior Transportation Analyst Federal Railroad Administration 1120 Vermont Ave, NW Washington, D.C. 2005

Mr. Irwin B. Kessman Director of Planning and Program Development FTA, Region 2 One Bowling Green, Room 429 New York, NY 10004 Mr. Frederick Riese Senior Environmental Analyst Department of Environmental Protection 79 Elm Street Hartford, CT 06106-5127

Mr. Karl Wagner Connecticut Council on Environmental Quality 79 Elm Street Hartford, CT 06106

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Mr. Jonathan Chew Executive Director Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials Old Town Hall – Route 25 Brookfield, CT 06804